

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I come to the end of my first term as RRF president, it seems as good a time as any to reflect on progress. George Bernard Shaw once said, *“Progress is impossible without change”*. RRF has come a long way in the 45 years since its official inauguration in 1966, and although our mission has remained the same, obviously we’ve changed with the times. Like some of you reading this, I wasn’t born when RRF was created but I can easily imagine the enthusiasm and sense of enterprise of our founders. When I look around at our current leadership, I know that those qualities have not changed, although the individuals have. Something has changed though. Over the last two years we have seen a steady influx of young professionals, straight from the torturous years of graduate school, stepping up to take on roles of responsibility within RRF. With them they bring change, and in this case, progress. They are a dynamic and pro-active lot, and perhaps appear less intimidating and thus more approachable than some of our more eminent members. That will surely help us to keep attracting young recruits – the lifeblood of any sustainable organisation. Within this particular cohort of young professionals there are undoubtedly future RRF directors and presidents; individuals who are quickly learning the ropes in preparation for guiding RRF through the next few decades of change. I’m already impressed by what they’ve achieved in the short time they’ve been involved, bringing in new ideas and testing out different approaches. I’m not the only one to have noticed either; at last year’s conference, a past president said to me: *“I envy you and the team of people you have around you”*. I know what he meant. Four of these individuals deserve special mention here – Libby Mojica (Website Coordinator & Chair of the Conference Committee); Travis Booms (Chair of the Early Career Raptor Researchers Committee); James Dwyer (Chair of the Conference Scientific Programme Committee); and Greg George (Secretary). These four are punching way above their weight so the next time you see any of them, buy them a drink and thank them for the hours of hard work they’re putting in on your behalf.

So we’ve talked about the benefits of change and its effect on progress, but, to quote Ellen Glasgow this time, *“All change is not growth, as all movement is not forward”*. A few days ago an email arrived in my inbox, containing a proposal that, if we choose to accept it, will change RRF forever. In fact it won’t just change it, it’ll destroy it. The outline of the proposal can be found on the Ornithology Exchange website: (<http://ornithologyexchange.org/>) to which all RRF members are entitled to access. If I understand correctly, the basic premise of the proposal, which is being driven by the American Ornithologists Union (AOU), is for the New World ornithological societies to disband, to be replaced by a kind of ‘super-society’, tentatively called the Society for Ornithology, to act as the single representative group of ornithological interests in the western hemisphere. Now, for some extant societies this proposal might make a lot of sense, especially if they are struggling financially, as some of them are. But RRF is different. Our geographic scope extends far beyond the boundaries of the New World, we’re not in financial meltdown and our membership is relatively stable. We produce a specialised peer-reviewed journal that is not controlled by outside influence, and



we enjoy focused annual conferences where raptor research is the central theme. Do we want to disband our society and then as individuals join up to the 'super-society'? What about our members who don't reside in the New World and whose research interests lie in the Old World? Do we just abandon them and their needs? How would we feel about losing our journal and having to compete for space in one of the four proposed super-society journals? How would we feel about having just a single-day raptor session at a large conference? Do we really want to give up on the 45 years of progress that we, and those who came before us, have worked so hard to achieve? The email I received has invited us to consider further exploring these proposed changes, and as you can imagine, the issue is high on the Board meeting agenda for October. If you have a view on the proposal, whether for or against, please let your RRF directors know. The Board's interim decision will be announced at the business meeting during the conference in Duluth, and it will also be posted on the RRF website shortly afterwards.

I look forward to catching up with many of you in Duluth in five weeks time – Julie O'Connor, Jerry Niemi and their local organising committee have lined up an exciting week of events, and all within a stone's throw of the Hawk Ridge raptor migration watchsite. Perfect! See you there.

Best, Ruth



## 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 5-9

Duluth, Minnesota



**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

Duluth, Minnesota 2011

For complete conference details, visit our website at [www.raptorresearchfoundation.org](http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org)

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC****OFFICERS**

President: Ruth Tingay  
Vice-president: Ted Swem

Secretary: Greg George  
Treasurer: Angela Matz

**DIRECTORS**

Eurasian: Fabrizio Sergio  
Southern Hemisphere: Miguel Saggese  
At Large Outside North America: Marc Ruddock  
North America #1: John Smallwood  
North America #2: Gary Santolo  
North America #3: Laurie Goodrich

At Large #1: Munir Virani  
At Large #2: Clint Boal  
At Large #3: Michael W. Collopy  
At Large #4: Carol McIntyre  
At Large #5: Torgeir Nygard  
At Large #6: Mike Kochert

For more information about the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. (founded in 1966), please visit the RRF website at: <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/>.

Persons interested in birds of prey are invited to join the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). *Wingspan* is emailed twice each year to all members of RRF and is available on the RRF website. Members also receive *The Journal of Raptor Research* (ISSN 0892-1016), which is published quarterly. For membership and subscription information, please contact: Ornithological Societies of North America, 5400 Bosque Boulevard, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; 1-254-399-9636 (phone); 1-254-776-3767 (fax); [business@osnabirds.org](mailto:business@osnabirds.org) (email); <http://www.osnabirds.org> (web).

**2011 Election Results**

New and returning Directors with terms beginning January 2012:

Eurasian: Fabrizio Sergio  
North American #3: Rick Harness  
Director at Large #3: Rob Bierregaard  
Director at Large #6: Miguel Ferrer

Many thanks to everyone who stepped forward and made this such a strong and healthy election. Thanks also to those who voted this year and to Nominations Chair, Laurie Goodrich, for coordinating the effort. Special thanks to Allen Fish, who was in a tie for the position of Director at Large #6 but who conceded the contest, on personal grounds, and a promise to re-stand in a future election (we'll hold you to that, Allen!). And finally, many thanks to out-going Directors, Laurie Goodrich, Mike Collopy, and Mike Kochert for their years of service to RRF.

**Editor's Note** – Thanks to the following contributors for this issue of the *Wingspan*: Joe Barnes, Richard Beirregaard, Karla Bloem, Clint Boal, Chris Briggs, Jessi Brown, Chang-Yong Choi, Jon Gerrard, Gene Jacobs, Shiv Kapila, Angela Matz, Libby Mojica, Joan Morrison, Bernd Meyburg, Jemima Parry-Jones, Jenna Sutherland, Ruth Tingay, Susan Whaley

*Wingspan* welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management. Please submit contributions via email to Petra Bohall Wood, *Wingspan* Editor, at [rrfwingspan@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:rrfwingspan@mail.wvu.edu). For long contributions, please send as an MS Word attachment.

Contribution deadline for the next issue is **15 February 2012**.

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## UPCOMING RRF MEETINGS

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Submitted by Libby Mojica

### **Raptor Research Foundation Annual Conference 2012 14-18 August • Vancouver, Canada**



RRF will hold its annual conference in conjunction with 8 other ornithological societies at the 5th North American Ornithological Conference.

The University of British Columbia and the city of Vancouver will host the 5th

NAOC in beautiful British Columbia. Vancouver, with its magnificent setting on the Pacific Ocean, offers a wealth of marine, coastal and terrestrial biodiversity, scientific resources and entertainment. NAOC-V will be a wonderful opportunity for ornithologists to experience the rich natural and cultural biodiversity of Canada's west coast and meet with their colleagues from all over North America and the world.

The opening reception will be the evening of 14 August and the closing banquet on 18 August. Field trips will be offered before and after the scientific program. The four day scientific program (15-18 August) will begin each day with an address by a distinguished NAOC Plenary Speaker and presentation of Society Awards. The remainder of the daily academic program will consist of symposia, contributed papers, poster sessions and scientific and ENGO workshops. Many exhibitors, including commercial publishers, equipment suppliers, artisans, local groups and ENGOs will be present throughout the meeting. Affordable housing will be provided by UBC starting at \$47/night (CAN).

#### Upcoming Deadlines

Application for Student Presentation Awards: December 15, 2011

Application for Student Travel Awards: December 15, 2011

Symposia and Workshop proposal submissions: July 15, 2011

**We welcome you to join us in Vancouver in August 2012!**

<http://www.naoc-v2012.com/>

The 5th North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC-V) is organized jointly by the American Ornithologists' Union, Society of Canadian Ornithologists/ Société des Ornithologistes du Canada, Bird Studies Canada, Association of Field Ornithologists, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, La Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservación de las Aves en México



[CIPAMEX], Waterbird Society, and Wilson Ornithological Society. The Steering Committee for NAOC-V, with representatives from each of the participating ornithological groups, is engaged in the conference planning details.

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## **2013 Raptor Research Foundation Annual Conference in Argentina 21-25 October, Bariloche, Argentina**

RRF is excited to announce our first annual conference in South America in conjunction with the Neotropical Raptor Network (The Peregrine Fund) and The World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls. The conference will be hosted by the Universidad Nacional del Comahue – INIBIOMA/CONICET, Bariloche, Argentina and co-hosted by Club de Observadores de Aves de Bariloche and SNAP (Sociedad Naturalista Andino Patagonica). The conference will be held at the Hotel Panamericano Bariloche, a five star hotel in downtown Bariloche. The local organizing committee chairs are Dr. Miguel D. Saggese, (CVM-Western University of Health Sciences, California, USA), Dr. Valeria Ojeda and Dr. Sergio A. Lambertucci (Laboratorio Ecotono, Universidad Nacional del Comahue – INIBIOMA/CONICET, Bariloche, Rio Negro, Argentina). For more information, please contact the RRF conference chair, Libby Mojica [ekmojica@wm.edu](mailto:ekmojica@wm.edu).

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## **News from the RRF**

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### **The William C. Andersen Memorial Award Special Session**

Submitted by Clint Boal, Andersen Award Subcommittee Chair

The William C. Andersen Memorial Award is an annual award presented for both the best student oral and poster presentation at the annual RRF meeting. Traditionally, students competing for the award made presentations in various sessions throughout the duration of the annual meeting. This made it difficult to have consistency in judging, and resulted in a wide variety of quality of papers in the competition. At the 2011 meeting, we are revamping the way in which the oral papers are presented and judged. All students wanting to compete in the Andersen oral presentation award were required to submit extended abstracts for pre-review by the award subcommittee. The eight highest ranked abstracts were accepted for the next stage of the competition, and will be presented together in one session at the 2011 meeting. I encourage RRF members to attend the Andersen Student Presentation Award Session on Thursday afternoon at the 2011 meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation. This session will be a showcase the best research being conducted by student members of RRF. Through your support and strong attendance, we can make this special session an annual event at the meetings.

**RRF Education Committee**

Submitted by Ruth Tingay



We are pleased to welcome Jeremy Scheivert to the RRF leadership team. Jeremy has been appointed as the new Education Committee Co-Chair, working in partnership with our other Education Co-Chair, Jemima Parry Jones. Between them, Jeremy and Mima will continue to develop new material for the RRF website, including interactive and interpretational material, teaching aids and lesson plans. Jeremy has a BS in Parks & Recreation and an MA in Environmental Education. He is employed as the Senior Education Specialist at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, where he's worked for the previous 15 years. Jeremy is a highly effective communicator and brings a wealth of experience to this position. We look forward to working with him and seeing the results of this dynamic pairing!

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**Recognition of RRF Donors**

We take this opportunity to thank RRF members who made donations above and beyond their memberships in 2010! Donations to RRF can be to the endowment, which is used for our Grants and Awards, or to unrestricted (operating) funds. Thanks to the following members who made this commitment to our organization: Jack Barclay, Eduardo Inigo-Elias, Yasunori Nitani, C. Stuart Houston, Robert Collins, Mariko Yamasaki, Laurie Goodrich, Petra Wood, Jae Abel, Beth Ann Swartzentruber, R. Wayne Nelson, James Harper, and Jim Fitzpatrick. Thank you!

Additionally, Travis Booms, RRF's Early Career Raptor Researchers Committee Chair, recently donated \$500 to RRF, to be used for the activities of the ECRRC. He did this through the painless mechanism of directing payment for one of his photos published in the National Wildlife Federation's magazine to RRF. Look for ECRRC events in Duluth, and join us in saying 'Thank You' to Travis!

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**Updates from the Conservation Committee**

Submitted by Joan Morrison, Co-chair

During the past 6 months, the Conservation Committee (CC) prepared and disseminated a letter and position statement regarding bills S838 and HR1558 introduced by the Congressional Sportsman's Caucus. Bill supporters claim there is "no credible science" behind the conclusion that lead from spent ammunition is negatively impacting wildlife. CC Co-chair Rick Watson prepared a thorough position statement summarizing the scientific literature on the subject of lead and wildlife. Assisted by many RRF members, this letter and position statement were sent to all members of the CSC in July. Thank

you to all members who sent out letters. If anyone wishes to view the letter and statement, or send it to their own Senators and Representatives, please visit the RRF website

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conservation/position-statements>.

The CC continues to solicit information from the regional subcommittee members on issues related to conservation of raptors. The CC also welcomes suggestions for committee members from the Oceanian (Pacific) region and the Middle Eastern areas of the Palearctic region. Further questions or requests for information can be sent to Co-chairs Rick Watson: [rwatson@peregrinefund.org](mailto:rwatson@peregrinefund.org) or Joan Morrison: [joan.morrison@trincoll.edu](mailto:joan.morrison@trincoll.edu)

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## Raptor News

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### News from the International Centre for Birds of Prey

Submitted by Jemima Parry-Jones

After a very very cold winter in the UK and the driest first half of the year for over a 100 years, I am delighted to report that we had a reasonable breeding season at the International Centre for Birds of Prey. The Steller's Sea Eagles after their long wait to produce their first chick last year, decided they had better make up for lost time and produced two chicks this year, both of whom have now fledged; if they go on at this rate we will have a flock of them soon. Their last years young, is now trained and giving flying demonstrations for the watching public, few people however get photos because most of the time they are just sitting there with their mouths open at the size of her, and I have to say she does resemble Concorde when flying over the audience, but it is a privilege to see her work, and she is enormous. We will fly her until she reaches adult plumage and then put her into the EEP run by EAZA. We are also flying, (although I should admit that flying might be a bit of an exaggeration) the young Eurasian Griffon Vulture that we bred last year, and that gives us a wonderful opportunity to speak about the Asian Vulture Crisis and tell people the story, which really is a fascinating one. Amazingly our other pair of Griffons produced a chick this year, even though the male has only one wing.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Asian Vulture project has now initiated a new group to oversee and assist with all the work. Called SAVE (Save Asian Vultures from Extinction) and headed by Professor Ian Newton, it had two inaugural meetings last year, one in India and one in Nepal, the Nepalese one was wonderful, as was seeing the project in Chitwan National Park, and I got to ride an elephant – I think on balance, I would rather have my horse, but not that close to Indian Rhinos! The oldest centre, at Pinjore in India, has just completed a fourth breeding season and is now using double clutching and artificial incubation, and we produced nineteen young, which for a country who has never done anything like this before, is very good and I personally am very proud of the team in India. We have bred all three critically endangered species in captivity, the future looks brighter in that respect, and we are learning all the time.

We have been even busier this year at Newent, with a reasonable breeding season, including some young merlins and an Aplomado chick, and we have increased visitor numbers every month so far,

which when going down to the flying field in February, with a bitterly cold easterly wind freezing all of us, is amazing. The winter was tough, so much so that we are having to completely rethink the housing for the trained birds, we had several nights of -17 C and days where it never got anywhere near above freezing. It was very beautiful, but always a worry for us with the birds. Of course the Steller's and the Snowy Owls just breezed through it, but some of the others had to come inside or have heat lamps, which are very costly to run.



It is still dry now, the trees over here are already turning and it is only August 2<sup>st</sup> today as I write, the ground is like iron and cracking, and my pond is as low as I have seen it. However the grass is still green and it is wonderful weather to bring out the visitors, and I am sure that, without doubt we will get the rain eventually. I had two guests from South Carolina last week and they could not believe that they went home with a suntan from the UK!

This hot weather is producing some superb flying from the falcons, with one Saker climbing to 4-6 hundred feet before giving the audience a tear drop stoop. One of our research projects has involved placing an 18 gram data logger onto a number of the birds just prior to flying them, so that the data loggers can be tested out before being used on a project with Andean Condors in Argentina. The good thing about using some of our birds is that we know we can get the data logger back, it also gives us some fascinating information about our own birds. Our Peregrine was achieving 6.5 wing beats per second, and the pattern of wing beat on all the birds is far more complex than previously known. The eagles were flapping at 4 beats per second and most of the birds were pulling 6 G's in a stoop, but sadly that was as high as it would read, so we suspect a higher reading would happen if we could get it!

The International Centre for Birds of Prey continues to flourish and next year will be our 45 anniversary – party time!





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## News from The World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls

Submitted by Bernd Meyburg

### World Working Group on Birds of Prey volumes on the WWGBP website

The conference proceedings of the World Conferences on Birds of Prey and other meetings and publications are now currently being digitised by the World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls (WWGBP). The individual scientific contributions concerning raptors and owls of a large number of authors worldwide, in several volumes with thousands of pages, are already online as PDF documents with a search function and can be downloaded free of charge at [www.Raptors-International.org](http://www.Raptors-International.org).

The following volumes are already available:

- *Raptors in the Modern World*, 1989 (3rd World Conference in Eilat),
- *Holarctic Birds of Prey*, 1998 (International Conference in Badajoz, Spain),
- *Eagle Studies*, 1996 (several eagle conferences)
- *Birds of Prey Bulletin No. 4* (A collection of twenty-eight new and original studies by 41 authors from 20 countries).
- *Raptor Conservation Today*, 1994 (4th World Conference in Berlin), and *Raptors Worldwide*, 2004 (6th World Conference in Budapest), have already been digitised and will soon be on the WWGBP website ([www.Raptors-International.org](http://www.Raptors-International.org)).

Information on the volumes that have not yet been digitalised can be found on the old WWGBP website at [www.Raptors-International.de](http://www.Raptors-International.de)

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### E-Mail discussion groups of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey (WWGBP)

**RAPTOR CONSERVATION** is the e-mail discussion group (electronic mailing list) of WWGBP ([www.Raptors-International.org](http://www.Raptors-International.org), [www.Raptors-International.de](http://www.Raptors-International.de)). All those seriously interested in the study and conservation of diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey (*Falconiformes* and *Strigiformes*) worldwide are encouraged to subscribe free of charge.

To join this group with over 1300 members please send an email to [raptor-conservation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:raptor-conservation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), with a copy to [WWGBP@aol.com](mailto:WWGBP@aol.com), informing us of your background and interests. By using this group, you can send information simultaneously to the entire group. Members can choose whether to receive individual messages, a daily digest, or simply read group posts on the web site (<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Raptor-Conservation/>). This group facilitates a continual archive of previous messages.

The list server "Raptor-Conservation" is unmoderated. This means that any member can send an email to the address [Raptor-Conservation@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Raptor-Conservation@yahoogroups.com), which is then immediately and automatically distributed to the more than 1300 members of the group worldwide. As a member of this group, you can send messages to the entire group using just one email address:

**VULTURE CONSERVATION** has been created for anybody interested in the New and Old World Vultures. The population crash in Asia makes discussion and rapid dissemination of information on these birds more important than ever. For more information: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Vulture-Conservation>.

**SPOTTED EAGLES** is an e-mail discussion group (mailing list or forum) for any person interested in the Lesser and Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina* & *A. clanga*). For more information: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Spotted-Eagles>.

**SATELLITE TELEMETRY.** The movements of birds have been investigated for the past 100 years mainly by ringing. In recent times satellite telemetry has provided us with a new device which makes possible the permanent and worldwide automatic location of birds over an extended period of time.

In view of the rapid development of this technique, a Yahoo Group for 'Satellite Telemetry in Ornithology' has been created for discussion and to help disseminate information on this technique and its results among researchers and other interested individuals to overcome the problem of the long time-lapse involved in the publication of articles in scientific journals. For more information: <http://www.egroups.com/group/SatTelOrn>.

**WWGBP@aol.com**

**[www.Raptors-International.org](http://www.Raptors-International.org) & [www.Raptors-International.de](http://www.Raptors-International.de)**

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### **African Fish Eagles at Lake Baringo Summary**

Submitted by Shiv Kapila

The number of adult African Fish Eagles at Lake Baringo, in Kenya's Great Rift Valley has halved over the last five years. Dr. Munir Virani, of The Peregrine Fund, documented a healthy population in 2005, but by 2010 the number of territorial adults had markedly decreased, according to Shiv Kapila, a long-term volunteer working on The Peregrine Fund's East Africa project.

Preliminary evidence shows that the main cause of this population decline is secondary poisoning originating from the abuse of Furadan, an extremely toxic, broad-spectrum carbamate. Intended to prevent losses of livestock to the lake's population of crocodiles, Fish Eagles fall victims to this poisoning menace as they feed on laced bait left on shore, intended for crocodiles. In one event in 2006, up to 13 adult birds perished as they made the most of what they presumed to be a good feeding opportunity; these Fish Eagles are routinely fed by tourists and so would have no reservations in feeding on fish left on shore, and when a glut of food is available, they seem to abandon their territorial nature.

Breeding rates have also declined dramatically. Only one active nest was identified in 2010 resulting two fledged juveniles in February 2011 (a rarity in itself), and a lack of optimal breeding habitat was noted. Most mature stands of *Acacia xanthaphloea*, the eagles' preferred nesting tree, have been systematically deforested for fuel wood and outcompeted by the invasive shrub *Prosopis juliflora*. P.

*juliflora*, locally known as ‘Mathenge’. It was deliberately introduced to the area in 1980 for fodder and fuel, but has quickly become the dominant form of vegetation found around the lake.

These factors may be affecting the lake’s remaining Fish Eagles. A high proportion of adults trapped and banded in the last 6-8 months have abnormalities. Varying degrees of leucism and hyperkeratinosis have been recorded which may suggest some degree of inbreeding, although genetic testing is needed. The lake’s geographical setting may also be another influencing factor given this new worry; Baringo is set in the middle of a semi-arid desert, a fact that may result in a very low turnover and influx rate of transient adults.

More work is planned to determine areas of the lake that have experienced the greatest loss, and for education programmes to be initiated against the dangers, environmental and human, of regular Furadan use. For more information on the African fish eagle work at nearby Naivasha see (<http://peregrinefund.org/projects/african-fish-eagle>).

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### **News from the Peregrine Fund**

Submitted by Susan Whaley

#### **Proceedings of Gyrfalcon conference to be available in December**

The proceedings of the conference “Gyrfalcons and Ptarmigan in a Changing World,” held 1-3 February 2011 in Boise, Idaho, will be published early online by December 2011 and in print within two months after (book ordering and price will be available at [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org)).

The conference explored the effects of climate change on the predator-prey relationship between Gyrfalcons and ptarmigan in the Arctic. It attracted more than 120 scientists, scholars, managers, and other conservationists from around the world who contributed papers on topics ranging from populations to plumage, and willows to wind farms. Ian Newton, a member and former chairman of The Peregrine Fund’s board of directors, summed up on the final day: “Sea ice is shrinking, spring is getting earlier, vegetation is clearly responding, tree lines are rising, willow patches are expanding, but not everywhere. Key species are going to lose habitat.” He also said that, unlike Peregrine Falcons of 40 years ago, Gyrfalcons are not in catastrophic decline at the moment. He urged researchers to go beyond monitoring the species to improving our broader understanding of this highly complex problem. The conference was convened by The Peregrine Fund, Boise State University, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Sponsors included the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi, Trust for Mutual Understanding, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Peregrine Fund is planning to develop an online database accessible to anyone working on topics related to birds of prey and climate change in the Arctic. A communications group has already been formed so that the research community can stay in touch, share their findings, and contribute to understanding the effects of climate change on wildlife in the Arctic. For more information, visit: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/subsites/conference-gyr/>

#### **U.S. military commends work on Aplomado Falcons**

The Peregrine Fund was honored in March by the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association for leadership and expertise in the effort to save the Northern Aplomado Falcon from

extinction. Since 2006, The Peregrine Fund has worked cooperatively with the military to release captive-bred falcons to the wild on White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. “This program has clearly demonstrated to commanders nationwide that programs to recover endangered species can be quite harmonious with military use of the land,” said Junior Kerns, chief of the Environmental Stewardship Branch at the missile range. Read more: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/news-release/207>

### **Wild California Condor chick hatches in Arizona**

Peregrine Fund biologists confirmed that a California Condor chick hatched in the wild at a new nest site near Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, northeast of the Grand Canyon. Biologists began monitoring the site several months ago after discovering the parents engaged in courtship and nesting behaviors. They made visual confirmation of an egg on February 24 and confirmed the presence of the chick on April 22. This is the 13<sup>th</sup> chick hatched in the wild since condors were first released in Arizona in 1996. One female and two males shared incubation, brooding and feeding duties. Three adults involved in courtship behavior is not particularly unusual, but this is the first time a trio has produced a chick in the history of the recovery program. Read more: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/news-release/210>

### **Lead continues to hamper condor recovery in Arizona and Utah**

Tests indicated that a total of six California Condors in northern Arizona and southern Utah had toxic levels of lead in their bodies in early May. Three of the birds died of lead poisoning; the other three were successfully treated and released back into the wild. X-rays showed 18 shotgun pellets in the digestive system of one dead bird and 6 in another. The third had remains of a spent bullet in its system, all suggesting that these scavengers died after eating one or more animal carcasses that had been shot with lead-based ammunition. This source of lead exposure continues to be the leading cause of mortality in condors in Arizona and Utah and the principal obstacle to the species’ recovery. Read more: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/news-release/212>

### **Egg swaps build strong condor populations**

A record number of eggs were transferred this year from The Peregrine Fund’s World Center for Birds of Prey to other breeding facilities to bolster the health and productivity of the global population of critically endangered California Condors. Swaps help ensure genetic diversity among captive and released condors, help condors establish strong pair bonds, and give biologists an opportunity to swap out an infertile egg in the wild with a fertile one laid in captivity. A total of 18 female condors laid 19 eggs this season. Six of those eggs were transported to the Los Angeles Zoo, one went to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, and three to the Oregon Zoo. Read more: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/news-release/213>

### **Condor release**

Three California condors will be released to the wild in the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in northern Arizona at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 24. The public is welcome to observe the release from a viewing area where spotting scopes will be set up and experts will be available to answer questions. Read more: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/news-release/217>

### **Orange-breasted Falcons released in Belize**

In June, a Pilatus PC 12 flown by a volunteer conservation pilot with LightHawk left Sheridan, Wyoming, with a precious cargo of five regionally endangered Orange-breasted Falcons, four



biologists, and about 800 frozen quail as food for the falcons. They were bound for the remote and rugged Maya Mountains of Belize to help restore a species now thought to number fewer than 40 pairs in Central America. The Peregrine Fund has studied these rare falcons in Central America for three decades. Read more: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/news-release/214>

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS and BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

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### Announcements

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#### **The 7<sup>th</sup> ARRCN Symposium on Asian Raptors: Raptor Migration and Conservation in Asia**

The Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network (ARRCN) and the Korea National Park Research Institute (NPRI) will hold the 7<sup>th</sup> Asian Raptor Symposium in the Republic of Korea from 13 to 17 January 2012. Along with plenary lectures on raptor migrations by invited researchers, two thematic sessions entitled 'Researches on raptor migration in Asia' and 'Current status of raptor conservation in Asia' will be prepared. More sessions for oral and poster presentations about diverse raptor studies in Asia, field trips to the world largest wintering area of Cinereous Vultures (*Aegypius monachus*) near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and a traditional Korean falconry demonstration will be organized in Ganghwa and Cheorwon County. Detailed programs and registration forms will be released soon. For more information, visit the ARRCN website (<http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~raptor/>). -- Chang-Yong CHOI ([subbuteo@hanmail.net](mailto:subbuteo@hanmail.net))

The **World Owl Hall of Fame** is currently seeking nomination for its **2012 awards**. The awards are for people and owls who have made this world a substantially better place for owls. Three awards are given each year:

- The **Champion of Owls Award** is given to humans who have had a broad geographical impact on owls in multiple fields such as conservation, science, legislation, education, and/or rehabilitation, usually over a lifetime.
- The **Special Achievement Award** is for humans who have made a significant contribution to owls through a specific project or for efforts in a specific geographic area.
- The **Lady Gray'I Award** is for an owl who has made outstanding strides toward making this world a better place for owls (usually with the assistance of some humans).

Nominations are **due by 4 November 2012** and will be judged by a panel of five owl experts from four countries. Winners will be notified in December and awards will be presented at the International Festival of Owls on March 3, 2012 in Houston, Minnesota, USA. Current sponsors for 2012 include the Global Owl Project, Tanja Sova, and the Gray Owl Fund. For more information and nomination forms, see <http://www.festivalofowls.com/worldowlhalloffame.htm>. -- Karla Bloem

#### **Raptor Workshop: Accredited through University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point**

5-day workshops entitled "Introduction to Raptor Field Techniques" will be held in Stevens Point, WI by Eugene Jacobs of the Linwood Springs Research Station and Loren Ayers of the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources. Fall Sessions: 12-16 September and 10-14 October 2011. Receive first hand

experience working with: live raptors, capturing, handling, banding techniques, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing, rappelling, blood sampling and more. Cost is \$435 and space is limited, so register early. For more information and a registration form visit <http://www.RaptorResearch.com>

### **For Sale**

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**RRF Publications, Pins, and Decals** –Hard copies of The Journal of Raptor Research (Vol. 1-30), most Raptor Research Reports, and RRF pins and decals may be purchased directly from RRF (Angela Matz, 101 12th Ave., Room 110, Fairbanks, AK 99701, USA; email: [angela\\_matz@fws.gov](mailto:angela_matz@fws.gov)). See [http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/back\\_issues\\_jrr.htm](http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/back_issues_jrr.htm) for details and prices. Orders for 4 or more issues receive a 30% discount. Hard copies of The Journal of Raptor Research (Vol. 31+) may be purchased from Ornithological Societies of North America (5400 Bosque Blvd, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; phone: 1-254-399-9636; email: [business@osnabirds.org](mailto:business@osnabirds.org); web: <http://www.osnabirds.org>). Some older issues are not available in hardcopy; but all issues from Vol. 1-39 are available on SORA (<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/jrr/>) for free download.

### **Raptor Books and Publications**

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Recent raptor books available from Whittles Publishing, Dunbeath Mill, Dunbeath, Caithness, Scotland. KW6 6EY t: +44(0)1593 731 333 f: +44(0)1593 731 400 w: [www.whittlespublishing.com](http://www.whittlespublishing.com)

- **Growing Barn Owls in my Garden** by Paul Hackney. An enjoyable and entertaining story of the author's success in restoring the iconic Barn Owl to areas where its numbers had drastically declined.
- **Kestrels for Company** by Gordon Riddle. A comprehensive picture is painted of this delightful falcon, based upon almost 40 years' observation in Britain. The reader is also taken to exotic locations such as the Seychelles and Mauritius to see the endemic island kestrels.

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## **RECENT THESES ON RAPTORS**

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**Barnes, Joseph G. 2011. An Ecological Study of Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 2006–2010. M.S. thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV U.S.A. 121 pp.**

Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) represent an encouraging conservation biology success story in North America during the twentieth century. Their distribution and population size suffered major restrictions after the initiation of widespread application of the synthetic pesticide dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane within the U.S. in the 1940s. The species was federally listed as endangered in the U.S. in 1969 and was subsequently delisted in 1999. Herein, I present my ecological research of peregrines within Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LMNRA), concentrating on the years 2006-2010. This thesis is comprised of two chapters. In Chapter 1, I describe the development, testing, and

utilization of a novel call-broadcast survey protocol to quickly establish territorial occupancy of peregrines. Overall response and detection rates of peregrines during the breeding season were 83% and 78%, with a 42% detection rate during post-breeding surveys. Response rates were not significantly different by time of day, or distance from eyrie (85–1600 m), and all responses occurred within 5 min of initiating the broadcast. In Chapter 2, I present results from my ecological studies of peregrines, focusing on known breeding population size, reproductive efforts, spatial distribution, foraging ecology, and competition. I also report on aquatic bird abundance data I collected during a separate inventory and monitoring project within LMNRA from 2004–2009. The aquatic bird data indicates seasonal shifts of potential prey in relation to observed composition of diet. The ecological results presented in Chapter 2 are consistent with a healthy, still-increasing, breeding population of peregrines—occupied territories increased from 20–33 with a mean breeding success rate of 70.6%. The seemingly recent expansion of breeding peregrines into areas farther from water, with their depressed level of reproductive success, indicate a likely habitat quality gradient that may act to limit future population growth in the region. Most compelling, are the abundant availability of aquatic birds, and the high dietary composition of those birds at peregrine territories in close proximity to permanent water. Additionally, I document an increased number of intraspecific agonistic interactions over time, indicating that density-dependent factors may begin regulating peregrine numbers in highly suitable breeding habitat near water.

**Briggs, Christopher. 2011. Carry-over effects and plumage polymorphism in Swainson's Hawks. PhD dissertation. University of Nevada, Reno, NV USA.**

The maintenance of genetic diversity in the face of forces such as genetic drift and natural selection has intrigued scientists for decades. Such processes should seemingly oppose diversity in a stable environment. However, environments are rarely stable in natural systems and processes can be complex. We investigate how a plumage polymorphism is maintained in a population of Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*) in northern California, USA. Swainson's Hawks are highly polymorphic in the belly, flanks and underwing coverts ranging from white to dark brown and seemingly everything in between. Generally, these morphs can be grouped into 3 general classes; light, intermediate and dark.

We first examined potential fitness differences among morph classes. Specifically we examined two primary hypotheses of heterosis (i.e., heterozygote advantage) and apostatic (i.e., frequency dependant) selection. Both mechanisms have been cited before in predator populations as potential mechanisms to maintain a polymorphism. However, we found no evidence of differences in any fitness parameter between the morph classes including; nest success, nest productivity, recruitment of offspring or lifetime reproductive success. There was marginal evidence of differences in survival between morph classes with dark individuals having a slightly higher adult survival compared to intermediate and dark morph.

We also examined sexual selection in this population. Individuals did not appear to mate assortatively (i.e. there was no preference for a mate based on one's own mate class). For females, there was similarly no evidence for imprinting. In contrast, males chose mates that consistently matched the maternal morph. Further, males selected mates more consistently than we expect by chance. Finally, males that were not able to select mates with the same morph class as their mother had a lower lifetime reproductive success. This result indicates that these males may not have invested as heavily in reproduction, or were lower quality males that could not attract a mate of the correct morph. This sexual selection of the males may aid in the maintenance of the polymorphism over time.

We also examined carry-over effects, processes and events in one season that affect an individual or population in another. Carry-over effects are garnering greater attention in studies of migratory species. Part of this newfound interest stems from tools and techniques allowing researchers to follow individuals or glean greater insights about foraging locations in different times of the year. We used feathers as indices of body condition from both the wintering grounds in Argentina and the breeding area. Specifically, we used the average daily growth of the feather, the level of corticosterone in the feather, and number of fault bars in the retrices and remiges of breeding hawks. We used deuterium levels in feathers to determine where each feather was grown to ensure that indices of condition came from a known location. Average daily growth was correlated with mass adjusted for body size, but corticosterone in feathers and fault bars were not. For males, average daily growth of feathers grown in Argentina and number of fault bars on worn feathers were correlated with nest success demonstrating carry-over effects and that individual in good body condition on their wintering grounds had higher reproductive performance. In contrast, measures of feather condition in females were not correlated with nest success. Corticosterone in feathers was higher in breeding males, but not in females. As males are the primary providers of prey for both the female and young nestlings their condition may drive the ability of a nesting attempt to succeed because an individual in poor condition may not be able to effectively provision the female or offspring.

**Brown, Jessi L. 2011. Ecology of the Southeastern American Kestrel. PhD dissertation. University of Nevada, Reno, NV USA. 192 pp.**

Life history theory predicts that fitness will be maximized by balancing production of offspring with the parents' residual reproductive value. Whether this balance is achieved at the expense of parental or nestling condition is not clear for species with intermediate life-history characteristics, such as the southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*). We provided food supplements to 61 nesting kestrel pairs that were matched with 63 control pairs in 2008 and 2009 in north-central Florida, USA. We analyzed between-year effects on reproductive decisions for the next year's first nest, such as timing of incubation, clutch size, and apparent nest success, along with annual adult female survival and nestling mass at time of fledging, with Bayesian hierarchical or capture-mark-recapture models. Treatment effects varied by year: in 2008, nestlings were similar in mass regardless of treatment, but food-supplemented adult females survived at very high rates. However, in 2009, food-supplemented nestlings were heavier than their control counterparts, and survival of supplemented adult females decreased. Weather and changes in nesting phenology, regardless of treatment groups, suggested that 2009 was more energetically demanding than 2008. We interpret the variable response of kestrels to our food supplement as evidence for a fixed investment in nestlings, such that in challenging years, adult females were unwilling to sacrifice their own condition for their nestlings.

Reproduction is thought to be costly, leading to a hypothesized tradeoff between investment in a current reproductive attempt and investment in self-maintenance and future reproduction. The outcome of reproductive attempts is frequently assessed by short-term measurements of investment, such as number of offspring at time of independence or body condition of offspring; however, a more appropriate measure in the context of lifetime reproductive strategy is the eventual recruitment of offspring to the breeding population. We used Bayesian mark-recapture models to evaluate the effects of a food supplementation experiment on the long-term survival of American kestrels that had fledged from experimental nests. Although nestlings that had received the food supplement tended to fledge with higher body conditions than control counterparts, their higher rate of survival was better



explained by treatment group independent of the difference in body condition. The food supplementation process likely affected nestling survival and recruitment through mechanisms not quantified here, such as changes in parental behavior during the post-fledging period or nutritional effects not measured by a size-corrected mass index. Our study demonstrates how food supplementation can result in a long-term demographic consequence for offspring. Moreover, this difference was greatest in a year when breeding adult survival was not positively affected by the food supplement, providing support for the hypothesized tradeoff.

Integrated population models (IPMs) offer enhanced abilities to explore population dynamics, especially when considering sparse data sets commonly associated with threatened or endangered populations. We analyzed the recent population trends of a population of Southeastern American Kestrels associated with a network of nest boxes in north-central Florida, USA. Although the subspecies is considered of conservation concern, little is known about demographic vital rates or population trajectories. We used Bayesian IPMs that simultaneously considered mark-recapture data sets, fledgling production, and population surveys to assess recent population growth rates, productivity, and demography. We further evaluated the potential of the nest box population to serve as a source to the surrounding population that used natural cavities by comparing local and overall population growth rates, apparent survival probabilities, and recapture probabilities between an IPM that explicitly modeled immigration and one that did not. Overall population growth rates suggested that the population was stable, even though immigration was apparently important with approximately 0.3 female immigrants per resident female kestrel each year. Explicitly modeling immigration resulted in lower estimates of juvenile kestrel apparent survival probability, suggesting that a large proportion of locally produced juveniles emigrated rather than recruited locally. These results emphasize the utility of data sets from the monitoring of nest boxes, as well as the potential contribution of juveniles fledged from nest boxes to the regional population. The IPM approach allowed effective modeling of real-world data sets, including sparse data that are typically characteristic of threatened populations.

Despite the recent rapid decline of many grassland bird species, the relative importance of open habitat extent versus habitat configuration for population persistence is unclear. Although many studies have attempted to address the effects of habitat area, edge, or landscape context on open habitat Passerine birds, few have considered other taxa such as raptors. Most studies also consider static assessments of bird populations, such as abundance indices or raw presence estimates, rather than dynamic processes of population expansion or contraction. We used southeastern American kestrels in north-central Florida as a model system to explore the relative influence of landscape metrics on site occupancy patterns at two spatial scales, and for two different time periods. We modeled the occupancy of kestrel nest boxes with Bayesian state-space models that separated the latent and partially observed process of true occupancy probability from the detection probability. Results from reversible jump Markov chain Monte Carlo (RJMCMC) algorithms suggested that the continued occupancy of nest boxes, or  $\phi$ , was negatively influenced by disaggregation of open habitats rather than the extent of that land cover during the later time period (2008-2010). None of the landscape metrics appeared to influence  $\phi$  during the early time period (1992-93) or  $\gamma_3$ , the probability of colonization of nest boxes between time periods. Our results indicate that continued fragmentation of open habitat would be deleterious for this threatened subspecies, but that many of the recommended land cover management practices, such as frequent low-intensity controlled burns, may help conservation attempts.

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## News of and Memorials to RRF Members

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### Tribute to Gary Bortolotti

Gary Roy Anthony Bortolotti was born August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1954 in Smith Falls, Ontario, just 25 km north of the summer home of the great eagle bander Charles Broley. It was in 1976 during a summer while he was studying forestry at the University of Toronto, that Gary called me about the possibility of joining our he Bald Eagle research project at Besnard Lake Saskatchewan. We laid out a summer of field work and he and Kandyd Szuba spent an extraordinary summer conducting a boat survey of Bald Eagles on Besnard Lake. The work was seminal in establishing a July population of about 100 eagles on the lake, and in beginning to understand movements of eagles from smaller streams and lakes where fish were spawning onto the main lake in July.

Gary, ever the enthusiast, became passionate about birds and about raptors. He came back to Besnard Lake in 1979 to 1982 to do his PhD fieldwork on Bald Eagles. His efforts enabled easy sexing of immature and adult Bald Eagles, showed the growth patterns of eagles by sex and brood size, and provided evidence for a sex-dependent hatching sequence with 63% of first hatched eggs being female and 69% of second hatched eggs being male.

In 1987, Gary joined the University of Saskatchewan as a University Research Fellow and then moved quickly to become a full Professor, becoming the first Houston Professor of Ornithology and the Rawson Professor of Biology. He continued work in northern Saskatchewan, particularly on Kestrels, and expanded his research activities around the globe particularly undertaking extensive research in Spain. He made contributions to avian behavior, physiology, ecology and evolutionary biology.

An inspiring teacher, he has left behind many students who have followed in his footsteps in avian biology. Gary served as Assistant Head of the Biology Department at the University of Saskatchewan for eight years. He was also a gifted photographer.

July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, Gary passed away from complications of acute leukemia. He is survived by his wife and partner for 23 years, Heather Trueman, their children Lauren and Eric and his sister Linda (Michael Hutcheon). Heather, herself dedicated to improving the environment, spent many hours in the field with Gary. -- Jon Gerrard

### R. D. (Robin) Chancellor (1921–2010)

Robin Chancellor died on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010, after a short illness, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He was aged 89.

Robin followed a career as a publisher (mainly art facsimiles) but, after retirement, was able to devote himself full time to bird conservation. His extreme short-sightedness prevented him from being an active field ornithologist so he channelled his considerable energy into administrative bird-conservation tasks and the editing of ornithological publications.

Robin was appointed Assistant Honorary Secretary of the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) in March 1974; Phyllis Barclay-Smith continued as Honorary Secretary and they worked together in the British Natural History Museum, in London. Robin became Hon. Sec. in 1978

when Phyllis retired, and served until 1987. During that time he introduced the first Director of BirdLife International, Dr Christoph Imboden, to his new tasks and responsibilities.

His special interest was birds of prey and he was entrusted by the former ICBP, and subsequently BirdLife International, with the editing and publication of the first two volumes of the Vienna (1975) and Thessalonica (1982) Raptor world conferences. From 1982 until shortly before his death, Robin was Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls (WWGBP). In this role he was editor or co-editor of six further comprehensive conference volumes published by WWGBP: *Raptors in the Modern World*, 1989 (3rd World Conference in Eilat); *Raptor Conservation Today*, 1994 (4th World Conference in Berlin); *Eagle Studies*, 1996 (several eagle conferences); *Holarctic Birds of Prey*, 1998 (International Conference in Badajoz, Spain); *Raptors at Risk*, 2000 (5th World Conference in South Africa); and *Raptors Worldwide*, 2004 (6th World Conference in Budapest).

This time-consuming occupation – the proceedings published from 1989 to 2004 alone comprised altogether more than 4,400 pages, in addition to other bird-of-prey volumes – remains his most significant ornithological legacy. The volumes contained original work only, and are still extensively cited. He had to substantially rewrite a great part of the text as English was not the mother tongue of many of the authors – an immense task. He had a great command of English, and excelled at reducing a mass of impenetrable verbiage into a few simple sentences. Reading French and German easily he also translated many papers from these languages into English. While working on manuscripts, he smoked more or less non-stop, and battered out the revised texts on an ancient typewriter.

Robin spent a lot of time in Africa with Leslie Brown, who described Robin as one of the few people he could stand to be with for more than a few days at a time. After Leslie's death, Robin accompanied several WWGBP members on several raptor expeditions to Latvia, Turkey, Zambia, South Africa, Namibia and Indonesia. Despite his already advanced age, he demonstrated remarkable resistance to heat and exertion. He spent the last few years of his life predominantly in Thailand.

In memory of Robin WWGBP has started to digitise the birds of prey volumes as completely as possible, and to provide them free of charge for all interested parties as PDF download data on the WWGBP website ([www.Raptors-International.org](http://www.Raptors-International.org)); indeed, several volumes are already available.

-- Bernd Meyburg and Ian Newton

### **Dr. J. Lindsay Oaks, collaborator and friend, died after a brief illness**

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Dr. J. Lindsay Oaks, College of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State University, after a brief battle with an aggressive neuroendocrine tumor on 15 January 2011. Lindsay, 50, was a close collaborator and long-time friend of The Peregrine Fund, first involved as a teenager in the 1970s with the captive breeding and restoration of endangered Peregrine Falcons. He subsequently qualified as a veterinarian and specialized in veterinary microbiology. He may be best known for his role in 2000-2003 helping us discover that veterinary use of diclofenac was the primary cause of mortality that drove the catastrophic decline of Gyps vultures in South Asia. He also worked with us to discover and prevent a viral agent causing mortality in captive Aplomado Falcon chicks in the mid-1990s, and in 2008 to expose lead from spent ammunition, a fatal element in food consumed by California Condors, as a contaminant also of processed venison consumed by humans. He advised us on everything from West Nile virus to highly pathogenic H5N1

bird-flu, and how to respond to these threats. His interests and collaborations go well beyond these accomplishments; he will be missed by many. -- The Peregrine Fund

### **Other News of RRF Members**

After 16 years at UNC-Charlotte, Rob Bierregaard has relocated to Philadelphia and is working on a new institutional homebase. In the meantime the rbierreg@UNCC.edu email will continue to function.

Brian Millsap joined the Division of Migratory Bird Management as the National Raptor Coordinator effective 3 July 2011. Brian will serve as the principal scientific coordinator for matters involving birds of prey within the FWS, as a policy advisor to senior management on issues involving raptors, and as principal liaison on raptor issues between the FWS and other national and international conservation agencies and organizations, industry and the public. Within the Division, Brian will coordinate activities closely with the Chiefs of the other Branches, particularly Population and Habitat Assessment and also Permits and Regulations. He will continue to coordinate eagle science and management for FWS nationally, including cross-program teams, guidance and policy documents, and other raptor permitting and conservation issues.



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